

Cooperation/Trust

Month: Jan.

Week #: 18

Day: b. Tues. Time: 30 - 40 min.

Lessons from Geese

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

Objectives/Aims

The students will recognize that cooperation is fundamental to the well being of a community and essential for a community to run effectively

Materials

none

Illustration

These two students seem to have learned a lesson from geese. I wonder what it is? The geese work together...

Background

Trust and cooperation are two foundational ingredients of any healthy and thriving community. Without trust, one is constantly suspicious of others and preoccupied with looking out for ones own self interests. Without cooperation, one often expends more energy than is necessary, sometimes with possibly less desirable results than if one had worked together with others.



Definitions:

trust - to implicitly believe that another will act in one's best interest

cooperation - working together to solve a common problem or task; putting the resolution of the problem above one's own pride and ego

The following activity is inspired first and foremost by geese. After I had written the lesson I came upon the 'Lessons from Geese' by Milton Olson, which elaborated on, and extended my ideas so I incorporated his work to enrich this lesson.

LESSONS FROM GEESE

by Milton Olson, adapted by Angeles Arrien

FACT 1

Each goose flaps its wings it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Background (continued)

FACT 2

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

LESSON

If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

FACT 3

When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

LESSON

It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

FACT 4

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON

We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

FACT 5

When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

LESSON

If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Group Activity

Note: Given the complexity in this play it's good to have one adult read the narrative as the other adult guides the students.

1. Say, "By a show of hands, how many of you saw geese flying south last fall? Did you know that Canadian geese fly all the way from Canada to Mexico? Wow! That's quite a feat! I wonder why those geese fly in a V formation? I wonder if we pretended to be geese on our way south, we could figure it out? Okay, first, I need 6 - 7 geese for my flock." Choose the students and arrange them, standing, in the shape of a V. "Finally, I need some air molecules for the geese to fly through on their southern migration to Mexico." Choose 6 - 8 students with 3 - 4 standing in front of the leader of the flock and 3 - 4 standing in front of the solo goose. "The stage is now set. I wonder what will happen when the air and the geese collide?"

2. Say, "In real life, both the air and the geese would be moving towards each other. To simplify things, I'm going to have the air move against the geese. Geese, begin to flap your wings in a controlled way. After all, you wouldn't want to waste a lot of energy flapping your wings in a wild or silly way on such a long trip. Now the air is blowing against the geese." Standing behind an air molecule, direct them with your hands towards the lead goose of the flock. Have them gently push into the chest of the lead goose so that the lead goose has to push back to retain his position. Say, "The air molecule is striking the lead goose head on and with it's full force." Roll the air particle off the lead goose onto the next goose and then the next with much less force associated

Group Activity (continued)

with each goose. “As you can see, the rest of the geese are being bumped on their shoulders with a lot less force. In fact, *as each goose flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the birds that follow.*”

Fact 1 Have several air molecules repeat the process. They can even ‘lift’ the wings of each bird as they pass by. Then have a lone goose leave the formation. It struggles to keep up with the other geese. Say, “*When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.*” Fact 2 As the journey continues, the lead goose continues to take the brunt of air molecules pushing against it. *When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.* Fact 3 “As you can see, the lead goose got tired bearing the brunt of the wind and has moved to the back of the V. The flock is making steady progress.” Have the geese begin to honk. Say, “*The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.*” Fact 4 Look, a goose appears to be sick and struggling.” Have a goose leave the V accompanied by several other geese. Say, “*When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.*” Fact 5 “And so the journey continues... I wonder if the flock will make it all the way to Mexico...” Excuse the flock and air molecules back to their seats.

Group Discussion Questions

1. By a show of hands, how many of you think the flock of geese will make it all of the way south? Why do you think they’ll make it?

A: Yes, because the geese are cooperating with each other by taking turns in the lead position and by flying in a V formation. This provides a 71% increase in flying range compared to a goose flying alone. (If the students don’t use the word ‘cooperation’ in their answer, make sure that you add it to the discussion.)

2. If our classroom community is like this flock of geese, what lessons can we learn from them?

A: Refer to the facts and lessons listed in the ‘Background Information.’

Variations/Extensions

1. During the play, ask the discussion questions after each fact is demonstrated.

2. Watch the video at: http://www.dailymotion.com/visited/search/geese/video/xsukj_lessons-from-geese

Conclusion

Say, “There is nothing wrong with flying solo, and sometimes it is even better to work on a problem by yourself than with other people. However, there are many times when working and cooperating with others not only makes the job easier but leads to even better results.”

Jan. 18 b. Tues.

Cooperation/Trust: Lessons from Geese



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